

EITC Campaign

Senator Carol Liu, Chair of Human Services

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What is the **EITC**?

The Earned Income tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable tax credit that is designed to lower the tax burden on low-income working families and stimulate the economy. Even workers whose income is too small to pay taxes can receive a refund through the EITC.

Message and **Benefits** of the EITC:

- The EITC is widely recognized as the federal government's most effective antipoverty program, lifting millions of low-income families and children out of poverty every year while incentivizing work and stimulating local economies.
- Eight hundred thousand Californians let 1.2 billion dollars in tax credits go unclaimed every year.
- Spending resulting from State residents' receipt of the federal EITC creates over \$5 billion in business sales in the State, supports almost 30,000 jobs, and creates more than \$1.2 billion in labor income.

*Note: Data from the New America Foundation report, **Left on the Table**, 2010.*

The **Goal** of the EITC Campaign is to:

- Cut the number of Californians who miss out of EITC in half by 2013 by ensuring that 400,000 more Californians apply for the EITC than in 2009.

Target **Audience** for the EITC :

- **Individuals/Families who may be eligible:** A person must have earned income, not be claimed as a dependent, and make under \$50,000, along with other qualifications.

Partners who can reach the target audience:

- **Non-Profit/Community-Based/Advocacy Organizations:** increase awareness, mobilize people/youth e.g., promote political action, raise funds, organize events.
- **Elected Officials:** increase awareness and build connections with their constituents through EITC outreach.

How to **Obtain** the EITC:

To claim the EITC, individuals must file a tax return. Families making below \$50,000 can get their taxes done for free at a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site. Individuals can find a VITA site by calling the IRS at 1-800-906-9887 or visiting the National Community Tax Coalition website at www.tax-coalition.org.

TACTICS include:

- *Posting information about the EITC on your website.* Potentially eligible individuals should call the IRS at (800) 906-9887 or be directed to <http://www.eitc.irs.gov/central/main/> or www.211.org.
- *Conducting a Tax Assistance Site Visit.* The VITA program is available nationwide and offers free tax help to low- to moderate-income people. VITA sites are usually located at community centers, libraries, schools, malls or other convenient locations. Most locations also offer free electronic filing. A great way to draw attention to VITA sites is by conducting a site visit and inviting the media. To locate the nearest VITA site in your district or state, call 1-800-829-1040.
- *Celebrating EITC Awareness Day.* The Internal Revenue Service has declared the last week day in January as federal EITC Awareness Day. You may celebrate by issuing proclamations or holding events. To learn more about EITC Awareness Day please go to: <http://eitc.irs.gov> and <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=178072,00.html>
- *Including EITC information in newsletters and on websites:* Potentially eligible individuals should be directed to <http://www.eitc.irs.gov/central/main/> or www.211.org.
- *Issue a Public Service Announcement, press release or an Op-Ed.* Press can be tied to EITC Awareness Day in January or to the opening of the VITA sites to enhance timeliness. Otherwise, the ideal time to submit this op-ed is in February or March, when people are more likely to be ready to prepare their taxes.